

**Intervention by Mr Mesut Yilmaz**  
**at the plenary session of the European Convention**  
**held on the 21st March 2002**

Mr. President,

Distinguished members of the convention,

Ladies and gentlemen,

**We have all embarked upon a new process to define and design the future of Europe. The Turkish people follow this process with keen interest and believe that under your able leadership, the Convention will provide fresh answers to momentous challenges ahead of us.**

We have already established a communications platform in turkey to inform our citizens of the work of the convention. They are already making use of this facility to express their opinion on the various issues on our agenda.

On the basis of some initial reflections let me summarise our views. Since its foundation, the European Union has evolved in a dynamic, pragmatic and flexible manner. The outcome of the last five decades has been a remarkable success. The community method proved its usefulness. Today, the European integration is a universal reference model.

At the beginning of this new century, the European Union is faced with a dual challenge. On one hand, the union is going through its most comprehensive enlargement process. In a few years time, the number of its members will almost double. On the other hand, the forces of globalisation and deepening of European integration, compel the European Union to assume new and more complex responsibilities.

The objectives of the European Union are evolving as a response to these two major challenges. This necessitates a fundamental restructuring of the existing framework.

We recognise that intergovernmentalism as a model of integration, has reached its limits. The European Union is currently neither an intergovernmental nor a supranational institution. However, in line with the global dynamics and in order to sustain the current momentum of integration, it has to go beyond intergovernmentalism. The capacity of renewal will depend on the delicate balance that recognises the role of nation states, but allows an essentially European capacity of decision-making to emerge.

The union currently has a serious democratic deficit. The political space founded beyond nation states has to come under democratic control. Decisions in this political space have to be taken more in touch with the European citizens. This calls for bringing the eu closer to its grassroots. We want a more transparent, accessible and efficient union. The decisions taken in the European parliament must not rest on the interests of small focus groups, but must reflect the wider interests of the European citizens.

Decision-making mechanisms in the union are far too complex. The transposition of EU legislation to domestic laws and regulations differ from one country to another. There is no uniformity in implementation. The revision of the institutional structures must take into account a membership capacity of thirty or more in order to adequately respond to future needs.

As it emerged as a strong economic and trading power, the union has not yet evolved into a political union, posed to play a constructive and decisive role on the international scene. The current international climate and challenges obliges the union to act as a global power. Yet to do so, the union has to pursue a more active, more coherent and visible foreign policy.

Not only the European citizens but also many people on the periphery of the European continent, expect the union to assume a more active role. This

absence is especially felt in alleviating the adverse effects of globalisation that threaten sustainable development and containing the new factors that endanger international security.

International terrorism, all forms of organized crime, the deterioration of the environment, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the multiplication of regional conflicts need a new management system. The Union can only legitimately assume such a responsibility through the full elaboration of an effective common foreign and security policy. Turkey supports the common foreign and security policy. We also see the need for improvement and overcoming existing shortcomings.

Mr. President,

The Europe of the future is destined to be more active on the international scene. The people of other regions and continents are demanding a Union not interested in its self- enrichment, but a union acting as a major player to bring justice, peace and prosperity to its wider geography. The Union should not be limited to a certain cultural heritage. It should reflect the secular and multicultural identity of the continent, which should be clearly defined at the end of the convention's work. This responsibility will become ever more pressing, especially after enlargement, since the Union will be a microcosm of the global society in its cultural, social and economic diversity, yet united around common values. As a country that is preparing itself for full membership, we believe that our assets will contribute to the projection of the Union as a global actor in all its dimensions.

In conclusion, I would like to wish the convention success in this historic and demanding task and assure all fellow members of our constructive cooperation.

Thank you.